

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES.

SPEECH OF HON. N. ABBOTT, OF MAINE.

Delivered in the House of Representatives, February 21, 1859.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union—

Mr. ABBOTT said :

Mr. CHAIRMAN: It is time that the true character of this Government should be understood by its constituent parts, and exhibited to the people of the country for their inspection. It is time that the Government should examine itself, and place the report on the records of the country, so that it can be seen and read by all men. Self-examination is as necessary to the purity and welfare of nations, as individuals; and, like individuals, they never stand still. They either advance or retrograde. In power, in wealth, in morals, and in all the elements of greatness, they either go forward or backwards. We read on the pages of history, from the commencement of the world to the present time, accounts of the rise and fall of empires—their progress and decline; but no description of a stationary Government has yet been written. Motion of some kind is an immutable law of their being. The framers of our free Government supposed it contained all the essential elements of progress. They risked their fortunes and their lives to establish it. They held it up to the world as a model Government—worthy of imitation, worthy to be adopted by all nations; and so it is, if humanity is wise enough and pure enough to live up to its principles.

Sir, let us now examine the moral and political condition of our country, and see in what direction it is drifting. During the brief period of my connection with this body, the Government has been frequently charged with profligacy and corruption. Are these charges true? If they are, we can have no surer evidence of the decline of our Government; for profligacy and corruption invariably precede the downfall of republics. Now, as perfection is not an attribute of Governments, any more than of individuals, profligacy and corruption are relative terms. Hence, I know of no better way to determine the truth or falsehood of these charges, than to contrast the present with the past; to compare the sentiments, opinions, and actions, of our present rulers, with the sentiments, opinions, and actions, of the rulers of our country who have preceded them. Before the comparison can be made, we must first ascertain who our present rulers are. Well, sir, who are they? They are not the people; for their voice is not heeded. They are not the men who nominally stand at the head of affairs; for they are mere puppets, moved by those who stand behind them. They are the ultra men of the South,

holding extreme notions on the subject of Slavery, and wholly sectional in their feelings and designs. These ultra men rule the Supreme Court of the United States; they rule the Congress of the nation; they rule the President in the White House; they rule the caucuses and conventions of the Democratic party; they rule the Democratic party itself, in all its actions; and, through the Democratic party, they rule the country. The National Government, and every branch of the National Government, is as fully and completely under the control of these few extreme men of the South, as are the slaves on their plantations.

I am asked how this is done. Sir, I will tell you how it is done. It is done by sectional organization, and by sectional action. There are fifteen slave States in the Union. The few leaders in the slave States manage to excite the fears of the people, by telling them frightful stories concerning the wicked purposes of the Anti-Slavery men of the free States; and, in that way, they induce all the slave States to act together as a unit. All the delegates from the slave States, in Democratic National Conventions, act together. All the Democratic Senators and Representatives in Congress, from the slave States, act together in their caucuses; and, in their caucuses, they outnumber the Democrats from the free States, two to one. In their caucuses, all party measures are agreed upon. Hence, the Democrats from the free States, being in a minority, are entirely in the power of their Southern dictators. They, in reality, have no voice in the legislation of the country; and they can have none, unless they bolt from caucus dictation; and that they dare not do, because of the severity of the penalties. Disobedience to caucus discipline is political death; death, without the benefit of clergy; death to the culprit, and death to all his innocent friends in office. He is read out of the party. He is libelled by the Democratic papers at Washington and at home. His friends holding places of profit, if he has any such, are suddenly removed, and tools, who will join in the howl against the poor sinner, are appointed in their stead. These are the means by which a few ultra Slavery propagandists of the South now rule this country, prescribe its foreign and domestic policy, mould and direct its institutions, guide its destinies, plot its ruin.

Having ascertained precisely who the present rulers of our Government are, let us see whether or not they are guilty of profligacy in the administration of its affairs. That we may do these men no injustice, let us contrast the

annual expenditures of Buchanan's Administration with the annual expenditures of former Administrations. During the first years of Washington's Administration, the costs of the National Government were only *forty-eight* cents to each inhabitant. The population of the country was about four millions, and the whole expenditures of the Government less than two million dollars annually. The costs of the Government now exceed *three* dollars to each inhabitant—more than *six* times as much as they were in the days of Washington. The population of the country now is about twenty-five million, and the Government expenditures about ninety million dollars. If the Government was administered now as economically as it was in 1790, \$13,000,000 annually would be the extent of its expenditures; and there would be a yearly saving to the people of \$77,000,000, and a saving to each head of a family of over *twenty* dollars a year. In 1830 and 1831, when General Jackson was President of the United States, the costs of the Government amounted annually to *one* dollar to each inhabitant. Now, they amount to over *three* dollars to each. Then, the annual expenditures were only \$13,000,000, and the population thirteen million; now, the expenditures are \$90,000,000, while the population is less than thirty million. Bring this Government back to the economy which characterized the Administration of General Jackson, and \$60,000,000 would be saved to the people annually; and over *fifteen* dollars would be saved annually to each head of a family in this country, *two* dollars to each individual, and *twenty* dollars to each man having a wife and eight children.

Is there any excuse for this extravagant waste of the public money, by the men now in power? Do the people receive any adequate equivalent for this enormous tax on their pockets? Is the country better ruled now than it was during the Administration of General Jackson? Are life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness, better secured now than then? No. And the men who now rule the country, and rob the people of \$60,000,000 of their hard earnings annually, dare not assert that they are. The money is not used for Government purposes, but for party purposes. It goes to Pro-Slavery partisans, in payment for partisan labor performed in the service of their leaders. Sir, I know that the assertion made upon this floor, that the party now in power squanders \$60,000,000 of the public money annually, is a startling assertion; but it is nevertheless susceptible of perfect demonstration, unless you deny the propriety of Jackson's Administration; and that you cannot, you dare not do.

I do not expect to be able, in a single speech, under the hour rule of this House, to point out all the leakages in our National Treasury—to show where every dollar of the \$60,000,000 plunder-money goes. But I do expect to exhibit, from official reports, facts and figures enough to satisfy any man that not less than \$60,000,000 of the public money is squandered annually by the party in power, to uphold and sustain its party ascendancy. I do not contend

that money is taken from the Treasury for party purposes *directly*, and without *color* of law. No; it is all paid out by Government agents, under appropriations made by Congress. But, then, the rulers of the Democratic party control both branches of Congress; they control the appointing power; and hence they make just such appropriations, and have just such agents to make Government contracts, and to spend and disburse the money, as they please. And although all the expenditures are made under the *forms* of law, yet the slightest scrutiny discloses a stupendous system of public plunder.

From 1830 to 1840, the average annual expenditures of the army amounted to \$4,000,000. Now, when we are at peace with all the world, the expenditures exceed \$18,000,000. With such a disparity in the expenditures, can it be possible that the money is honestly expended, that there is no favoritism in army contracts? no partisans indirectly rewarded for services rendered, or to be rendered?

In 1855, proposals were sent to the Treasury Department to furnish the granite for the extension of the Treasury building. Edward Hawks, of Belfast, Maine, offered to furnish it for \$308,385. If the contract had been given to him, as it would have been if there had been no favoritism shown, the Government would have saved, in that one item, from one to two hundred thousand dollars. It was given to Messrs. Beals & Dixon, whose bid, on the face of it, as *appears* from the Treasurer's report, was less than Hawks's, it being, as it there stands, \$243,546. Hence, on the face of the transaction, the bidders *appear* to have been treated fairly, and the public interest *appears* to have been secured. But, according to the specifications in Beals & Dixon's bid, they are to have *extras* and *additions* on a large number of items.

Now, I have been informed, by men who ought to know, that the drafts upon the Treasury, to pay for these *extras* and *additions*, will be nearly equal to the bid, as it stands on the face of the report. Now, sir, I do not know, of my own knowledge, how this matter is; but I do know that the transaction bears unmistakable evidence of a design to cheat the Government for the benefit of somebody. Whether the stealings are to be shared between the contracting parties, the Government agents, and Messrs. Beals & Dixon, or for what purpose they are to be applied, will probably remain forever a Government secret. Bill after bill, which is adverse to our true interests, and hostile to the spirit of our free institutions, such as bills for the increase of the army and navy, bills for the construction of war steamers, bills for the construction and repair of fortifications, and the like, are forced through Congress by men who are looking for Government contracts, dependent on their passage. When such bills are up, the outside lobby pressure is immense, which is pretty good evidence that Government contracts, under our present rulers, are tolerably profitable.

The Government expenditures, in and about

our docks and navy yards, for the construction of yards, the repairs of vessels, and the purchase of fuel and materials for the navy, prior to 1842, were under the control of a Board of Commissioners. Now they are under the control of the Navy Department. From the organization of our Government, in 1789, to 1842, while these expenditures were under the direction of Commissioners, the whole amount for *fifty-three years*, was only \$7,023,942. Now, under the direction of the Navy Department, they amount to nearly that sum in a *single year*. In 1857, they amounted to \$5,508,119. In 1858, they amounted to \$6,028,949, as appears from the records of the two bureaus through which the expenditures were made. Thus it will be seen that during the *two years* of Buchanan's Administration, these expenditures have taken from the Treasury nearly double what was taken for those purposes from 1789 to 1842. Now, sir, does any man want anything more than these *figures* to satisfy him that there is something wrong in this branch of the Government service? Do we not see, as clearly as we see the sun at noon, in a cloudless day, that there are now enormous frauds in Government *contracts*, or in some other way connected with the management of our docks and navy yards? But, sir, there is other evidence, besides these figures, tending to show the existence of these frauds—evidence given under oath—evidence showing that the President, the Secretary of the Navy, and J. Glancy Jones, (last year a member of this House, and now Minister at the Court of Austria,) have all *winked at*, if not *participated* in them. John F. Smith, when questioned about the appointment of a coal agent for the navy yards, said, among other things, "*Finally, it was agreed, that if the Secretary would appoint either of them, he should appoint Dr. Hunter, Mr. Getz, and Mr. Smith. That the arrangement was communicated to the Hon. J. Glancy Jones; and that the President also understood that the emoluments of the office were to be given to the THREE.*" On cross-examination, the witness repeated, "*the President knew that the THREE were to divide the emoluments of the office, and that the parties were satisfied with the decision.*" Sir, comment is unnecessary. *Three men appointed to one office. Three men to get their fingers into the Treasury in lieu of one. Three political partisans to feed from the public crib, when the services of only one is wanted. Shame, shame on the men who permit it! When the highest officers of the Government shall encourage, sanction, or wink at, such abominations, it is about time for the sovereign people to awake to the dangers of their country, and rebuke such infamous conduct.*

Prior to the last session of Congress, appropriations had been made, from time to time, for the erection of a custom-house in New Orleans, amounting in all to \$2,675,000. The original appropriation to build the house was \$100,000, which sum was amply sufficient for the purpose; and all that ever would have been asked for, if there had been no chance for public plunder, under the cover of Government con-

tracts. Last session, the Senate passed an appropriation bill, in which was an item of \$350,000, to continue the work on this custom-house. The House of Representatives, by a pretty decisive vote, struck out that item. The bill went back to the Senate, and the Senate put it in again. The bill being again returned to the House, the House again struck out the obnoxious item. The Senate then asked for a committee of conference, and the House joined in a committee. That committee changed the item to \$250,000, and reported in favor of its passage; and it did pass both branches of Congress, and was approved by the President. Sir, the pertinacity manifested in holding on to that appropriation, and in forcing it through Congress, excited suspicion in my mind that promises of magnificent Government contracts had some little connection with the efforts made; and, sir, does not the fact that the money is all gone, and more asked for, tend to prove that my suspicions were well founded?

I find a bill upon my desk, reported by the Committee of Ways and Means this session, appropriating \$250,000 more for continuing the work on this same New Orleans custom-house; which, together with the former appropriations, amount to \$3,175,000, which has been squandered towards the erection of a single custom-house. The whole expenditures of the Government from the 4th March, 1789, to the 1st January, 1792, when the first statement was made, amounted to only \$1,919,589. In 1810, the whole expenditures were only \$5,311,082. Thus we find that there has been drawn from the Treasury, under the pretence of building a single custom-house, \$1,255,411 more than the entire expenditures of the Government for nearly three years of Washington's Administration, and nearly as much as the whole expenditures of the Government in 1810.

I will notice the impositions and frauds that have been practiced upon the Treasury, in the name and under the guise of one other incipient custom-house structure, and then I will bid adieu to the custom-houses, and turn my attention for a few moments to their inmates. An appropriation was originally made of \$30,000, to build a custom-house in Charleston, South Carolina. Between the time when the original appropriation was made and the close of the Thirty-fourth Congress, \$1,670,000 in additional appropriations had been made, from time to time, towards the completion of the building. Last session, the Senate passed a bill appropriating \$250,000 more to continue the work. The appropriation was twice voted down by the House, but was finally passed through, under a report from a conference committee, reducing the amount to \$200,000. That money, we are told, is all gone. The \$30,000 is all gone; the \$1,670,000 is all gone; the \$200,000 is all gone, and now we are called upon for more. And, strange to say, the Committee of Ways and Means have heeded that call, and have, this session, reported a bill appropriating \$200,000 more to continue the work, or, more properly speaking, to feed

hungry and clothe *naked* Democratic politicians, who rely on Government patronage and Government contracts for subsistence. There are army contracts, navy contracts, contracts for the purchase and sale of public property, contracts for carrying the mail, and various other Government contracts, which I have not time to examine now, and which I hope may not generally prove as ruinous to the Government as the sale of Fort Snelling, by which the Government was swindled out of at least \$300,000, by the faithlessness or frauds of its own agents.

Sir, I have no means of telling the exact amount, yet it is evident that millions of dollars are squandered annually, by retaining in the public service custom-house officers, diplomatic and other agents and employes, whose services are not needed. In 1857, the whole amount of revenue collected at the custom-house in Wilmington, Delaware, was \$2,004; *eight* custom-house officers were employed to collect it, at a cost to the Government of \$15,848—loss to the Government of \$13,344, over and above the entire revenue collected. At the custom-house in Annapolis, Maryland, the same year, there was collected \$374; *four* officers were employed in its collection, at a cost of \$983—loss to the Government of \$609. At Ocracoke, North Carolina, there was collected, same year, \$82; *seven* men were employed in its collection, at a cost to the Government of \$2,301—loss to the Government, beyond the revenue collected, \$2,219. At Port Oxford, Oregon, same year, there was collected \$5; *two* men were employed in its collection, at a cost of \$2,703—loss to the Government, \$2,698. At Monterey, California, there was collected, same year, \$45; *three* men were employed in its collection, at a cost of \$7,050—loss to the Government, \$7,005.

A Government that creates and continues collection districts, year after year, where there is comparatively no revenue to collect, for the sole purpose of giving *sinecures* to six or eight men in each district, to reward them for party services, is a Government that a free people will not long sustain. *Seven* Government officers, kept under pay the year round, to collect \$22 revenue; *three* officers to collect \$45; *two* officers to collect \$5, are *curiosities*, indeed, in a Government where the people have retained the sovereign power in themselves, and pay the Government expenses.

But these are no greater *curiosities* than some of the appropriations made for the erection of buildings in which to collect the revenue. Three million one hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars to build a custom-house in New Orleans is decidedly a *curiosity*. Two million one hundred thousand dollars to build another in Charleston, South Carolina, is a *curiosity* worth looking at, by a people who furnish the money by the sweat of their brows. The great object of a free Government is exemption from such impositions—exemption from taxation to support in idleness and luxury a lazy, privileged class, to poison and corrupt the social system, to riot on the industry of

others, and glory in the degradation of aristocratic dissipation. There are many other collection districts in the country, well supplied with officers, where the whole revenue collected is not equal to the salaries of the officers appointed to collect it; but I have not time to refer to them now in detail.

I have in my mind several smaller leakages, which help to deplete the Treasury, such as the \$31,000 given to the President annually, in the shape of perquisites, in addition to his constitutional salary of \$25,000, and in violation of the Constitution; such as the new corps of commissioners of customs, recently appointed, with *no* duties to perform, but to visit the collectors in their several States once a year, and receive their salaries of \$3,000 each; such as the disbursing agent at New Orleans, appointed to disburse the money appropriated to build the custom-house at that place, at a salary of \$6,000 a year, when there is a superintendent under pay at ten dollars a day, who can disburse the money just as well as not, with no additional cost to the Government; such as keeping four times as many naval officers under pay, from year to year, as can be employed in the naval service, rusting out in perfect idleness upon the dry land.

But, waiving these smaller matters, I desire, sir, to call your attention, and the attention of the country, to a stupendous fraud upon the Treasury and upon the people, in the form of appropriations made for *miscellaneous* purposes. Now, a small appropriation is wanted annually for such purposes, and only a small appropriation. In 1800, the appropriations for miscellaneous purposes amounted to \$193,636; in 1810, \$315,783; in 1850, \$1,363,297. In 1857, appropriations for miscellaneous purposes were made to the enormous amount of \$18,946,189, and increased a trifle in 1858. Thus we see that this Government now expends annually, for mere miscellaneous purposes, *ten* times as much as the whole expenditures of the Government during the first years of Washington's Administration; and \$6,000,000 more than the entire expenditures of the Government in 1830. Where does this \$18,000,000—nay, almost \$19,000,000—appropriated annually for miscellaneous purposes, go? Sir, I desire to know what has become of the \$37,000,000 appropriated the two past years for miscellaneous purposes? I must know, before I will vote for a single appropriation containing such items. As a man, I protest against such abominations. As a representative of the people, I protest against them. I will not submit to them in silence.

Appropriations are specifically made for every item of expense worth naming. The appropriations for miscellaneous purposes are designed to cover very trifling outlays, that are too small to be named. Sir, I repeat, what becomes of this vast amount of money, thus appropriated annually? It is all used up. The Government officers take it all out of the Treasury. Sir, it is a part of the Democratic secret-service fund; one of the main pillars on which the Democratic party now stands; the cohesive

power which keeps it from breaking into fragments. With its present sins unrepented of and unforgiven, the Democratic party could not survive a single election, in any part of the country, if the doors of the National Treasury were barred against its *felonious* fingers. But bar them you cannot, so long as the people, by their votes, keep the present rulers in power; for they have the control of every branch of the Government, and they have learned how to open the Treasury with *false* keys, yet under the *color* of law. When Buchanan was inaugurated, less than two years ago, there was a surplus in the Treasury of \$24,000,000. All that is gone; all the revenue of the country, amounting to \$50,000,000 annually, is gone; the Government has incurred a debt of \$40,000,000; and now it is crying for *more, more*. A bill is now before us, asking for authority to add \$20,000,000 more to our national debt. The National Treasury has become a perfect sieve. Money to any amount may flow in, but it escapes instantly. It has a waste-way at every point, a leech at every pore. These leeches suck from every farmer and mechanic in the country, in the shape of duties on articles of daily consumption, from *fifteen* to *twenty* dollars annually, which is more than the whole amount of their *town, county, and State* tax. Sir, I am for choking off these leeches, great and small; for barring out of the Treasury the thieves who rob it by fraudulent contracts; for setting adrift the pensioners of party, who deplete it by the receipt of salaries *without* service, and who forage on the public money, and corrupt the public morals. Such is my remedy for an exhausted Treasury. We want no more revenue. We have enough now. We want no increase of the tariff. The tariff is high enough now. What we want is, *reform* in the Government abuses—*honest* men to manage our national affairs. And we will have them. Yes, we will have them. Robbery, by public officers, must be checked, or the people will be beggared—the country ruined.

Sir, I desire now to ask you, and to ask the people of this country, if the charge of profligacy is not made out against our present rulers? I desire to ask if it is not apparent that this Government might be administered as cheaply now, in proportion to its population, as it was during General Jackson's Administration? I desire to ask if \$60,000,000 of the public money is not squandered annually to prop up a falling dynasty? I desire to ask, if every head of a family, throughout the length and breadth of this Union, does not have to contribute from *fifteen* to *twenty* dollars annually, towards the money thus squandered? And I desire to ask the people how long they mean to submit to such rule? How long they mean to give their votes for such rulers?

Sir, I will now turn from the consideration of the profligacy of our present rulers, to the charge of corruption made against them. And here, again, that I may mete out exact justice to them, I will contrast their sentiments, opinions, and acts, with the sentiments, opinions, and acts, of the early fathers of the Republic. This

I need not do, to make good the charge of corruption; for the fact that profligacy is proved, to the fullest extent, is sufficient evidence of corruption. Profligacy, in the administration of public affairs, is corruption. But I will proceed to contrast the opinions and acts of the old with the present rulers.

Washington, the father of his country, and the first President, regarded Slavery as an evil, and expressed a hope that "*it would soon be abolished in the States.*"

Buchanan, the present President, during the last session of Congress, used the whole power and patronage of his official position to give Slavery the pre-eminence over Freedom. By his favorite Lecompton bill, Kansas was urged to step into the Union *with* Slavery, but denied admission without Slavery; thus discriminating in favor of Slavery, and against Freedom.

The Declaration of Independence enunciates the precious truths that "*all men are created equal, and endowed with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.*" The majority of the Judges of the Supreme Court of the United States have recently decided that "*negroes have no rights that white men are bound to respect*"—thus denying all rights to a whole class of men.

In 1787, the old Confederation passed an ordinance excluding Slavery forever from the Northwestern Territories, because of its blighting influence upon the energies of our new country. In 1858, the Democratic party in Congress, backed by the Executive head of the nation, labored six long months in the inglorious attempt to plant and perpetuate the cursed system on the virgin soil of Kansas.

The Supreme Court of the United States, in the case of *Prigg vs. the State of Pennsylvania*, decided that—

"The state of Slavery is deemed to be a 'mere municipal regulation, funded upon, and 'limited by, local law.'"

Chief Justice Marshall, in delivering the opinion of the Supreme Court, in 1810, in the case of *Sere vs. Pitot*, said:

"The power of governing and legislating for 'a Territory is the inevitable consequence of 'the right to acquire and hold territory. Could 'this position be contested? The Constitution 'declares that Congress shall have power to 'dispose of and make all needful rules and 'regulations respecting the territory or other 'property belonging to the United States. Accordingly, we find Congress possessing and 'exercising the absolute and undisputed power 'of governing and legislating for the Territory 'of Orleans.'"

In 1828, the same court held, in the case of *Canter vs. the American Insurance Company*, that—

"The right to govern may be the inevitable 'consequence of the right to acquire territory. 'Whichever may be the source whence this 'power may be derived, the possession of it is 'unquestioned.'"

The same court, having lost its conscience and forgotten its former decisions, or becom-

the tool of Slavery propagandists, has reversed its former decisions, and now holds that—

“Slavery exists in all of the Territories of the Union under the Federal Constitution, and that Congress has no right to legislate it out.”

In 1847, President Buchanan wrote a letter to the Democracy of Berks county, Pennsylvania, asserting the power of Congress over the Territories. I read from it:

“After Louisiana was acquired from France, and when the State of Missouri was about to be admitted into the Union, the Missouri question arose, and, in its progress, threatened the dissolution of the Union. This was settled by the men of the last generation in a spirit of mutual concession. Under the Missouri Compromise, Slavery was forever prohibited north of 36° 30′. Congress, in the admission of Texas, adopted that rule; and, in my opinion, the harmony of the States, and even the security of the Union itself, requires that the line of the Missouri Compromise should be extended to any new territory which we may acquire from Mexico. Such has been my individual opinion, openly and freely expressed, ever since the commencement of the present unfortunate agitation; and, of all places in the world, I prefer to put them on record before the incorruptible Democracy of old Berks. I therefore beg leave to offer you the following sentiment: The Missouri Compromise—its adoption, in 1820, saved the Union from threatened convulsion; its extension, in 1848, to any new territory which we may acquire, will secure the like happy results.”

In this letter, Buchanan, before he became merged in the Cincinnati platform, and when he spoke as a *man*, from the promptings of a living soul, iterated and reiterated the power and the necessity of Congress' excluding Slavery from the Territories north of the compromise line. Now, speaking from the *belly* of the Cincinnati platform, he asserts that—

“Slavery exists in Kansas as fully as in Georgia or South Carolina;” “Slavery exists in Kansas under the Constitution of the United States. This point has at last been finally decided by the highest tribunal known to our laws. How it could ever have been seriously doubted is a mystery.”

What Buchanan saw, as clear as sunlight, when he was a *man*, is now a perfect *mystery*. Human rights, things obviously necessary to the peace of the Union, truths which nobody ever doubted before, when viewed through the dark lens of the Cincinnati platform, are wholly obscured from his vision, or seen only to be perverted.

In 1820, Congress passed an act declaring the African slave trade piracy; affixed the death penalty for its violation; and all sections of the country admitted it to be eminently just and proper. This session of Congress, *forty-two* members of the House voted against a resolution, indicating that they were in favor of the revival of the trade.

In 1820, Congress, by the passage of the Missouri Compromise act, inhibited Slavery

north of 36° 30′, thereby proclaiming to the country and to the world, that, in their opinion, Slavery was an evil.

In 1854, Congress repealed that most meritorious act, and thereby contradicted its former opinion.

Judge Summers, of Virginia, said, in a speech in 1832:

“A slave population produces the most pernicious effects upon the manners, habits, and character, of those among whom it exists.

Mr. GARTRELL, of Georgia, in a speech delivered on this floor, last session, said:

“I repeat, therefore, when I am asked if any statesman can maintain that the right of property in African slaves is as sacred as any other right of property, I reply yes! a thousand times yes! It is consecrated by reason; it is consecrated by our experience, because it has been the foundation of a highly-refined culture, of the richest and most potent industry of a powerful empire, and a rational, a stable, and a noble freedom for the white race in our Southern States.”

John Randolph, on the floor of Congress, when speaking of Slavery, said:

“Where are the trophies of this infernal traffic—the handcuff, the manacles, the blood-stained cowhide? What man is worse received in society for being a hard master? Who denies the hand of sister or daughter to such monsters?”

On the same floor of Congress, WILLIAM SMITH, of Virginia, has recently said:

“I believe that the institution of Slavery is a noble one; that it is necessary for the good, the well-being, of the negro race. Looking to history, I go further, and say, in the presence of this assembly, and under the imposing circumstances surrounding me, that I believe it is God's institution.”

Mr. FAULKNER, a distinguished leader in the Democratic party, and now a member of this House, in a speech delivered in the Virginia Legislature in 1832, uttered sentiments which, if uttered now, would excommunicate him from the Democratic fold, as a fanatic and a traitor to his party. I will quote his exact language:

“Slavery, it is admitted, is an evil. It is an institution which presses heavily against the best interests of the State. It banishes free white labor; it exterminates the mechanic, the artisan, the manufacturer; it deprives them of occupation; it deprives them of bread; it converts the energies of a community into indolence, its power into imbecility, its efficiency into weakness. Sir, being thus injurious, have we not a right to demand its extermination? Shall society suffer, that the slaveholder may continue to gather his crop of human flesh? What is his mere pecuniary claim, compared with the great interests of the common weal? Must the country languish, droop, die, that the slaveholder may flourish? Shall all interests be subservient to one—all rights subordinate to those of the slaveholder? Has not the mechanic, have not the middle classes, their rights—rights incompatible with the existence of Slavery?”

Noble sentiments these, and nobly spoken! All honor to the head and the heart of Mr. FAULKNER, in 1832. Would to God that such sentiments pervaded the hearts of our rulers now. Would to God that Mr. FAULKNER dared utter them on this floor, in 1859! But to show the deplorable and almost infinite declension of our rulers. I will quote from Senator HAMMOND's speech, delivered in the other wing of the Capitol last session:

"In all social systems there must be a class 'to do the menial duties, to perform the drudgery of life. That is, a class requiring but a low order of intellect, and but little skill. Its requisites are vigor, docility, fidelity. Such a class you must have, or you would not have that other class which leads progress, civilization, and refinement. It constitutes the very mud-sills of society and of political government; and you might as well attempt to build a house in the air as to build either the one or the other, except on this mud-sill."

Here is a full and perfect denial, by one of the chief rulers of our Republic, of the capacity of man for self-government. The great mass of the people must forever remain "*mud-sills*" for society to rest upon. Progress, refinement, civilization, all depend on a social system which divides the people into two distinct classes, "*mud-sills*" and *gentlemen*. What a commentary on the degeneracy of our rulers! What a libel on our free institutions! What an insult to the intelligent masses of our American citizens!

Jefferson denounced the whole commerce between master and slave as a continual exercise of the most unrelenting despotism on the one hand, and degrading submission on the other; and, in his Notes on Virginia, he emphatically asks:

"With what execration should the statesman be loaded, who, permitting one-half of the citizens thus to trample on the rights of the other, transforms those into despots, and these into enemies; destroys the morals of the one part, and the *amor patriæ* of the other? Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure, when we have removed their only firm basis—a conviction, in the minds of the people, that these liberties are the gift of God; that they are not violated but by his wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, and that his justice cannot sleep forever."

Jefferson looked upon statesmen, who simply permitted Slavery to exist, as deserving the execration of their fellow-men. He trembled for his country because they simply permitted it. What, then, must be the feelings of men of Jefferson's type at the present time, when the great Democratic party, holding the Government of the country in its hands, and every branch of the Government, asserts and maintains that Slavery is a *heavenly blessing*; "*that the right of property in slaves is before and higher than any constitutional sanction, and as inviolable as the right of the owner of any property whatever!*"

What a contrast between the sentiments, opinions, and acts, of the early and the present rulers of our country! Black and white, light and

darkness, truth and falsehood, are no wider apart. The former recognise the great principles of human rights and human equality, written, by God himself, in the constitution of every man. The latter deny the existence of any such principles, and assert that the inequalities of men are so great, that one class "*has no rights whatever that another class is bound to respect.*"

From the birth of our Republic, and even before its birth, when the States were separate colonies, down to 1854, Slavery, South and North, was regarded by all men as a great moral, social, and political evil. Then, all at once, the South became pregnant with, and quickly gave birth to, a *new* idea. Slavery was suddenly transformed from an evil to a "*heavenly blessing*;" an institution ordained by God himself, for the good of the black man as well as the white. Congress took the new idea to its bosom; gave it perfect freedom of expansion by the abrogation of all restrictions to its spread; the Supreme Court adopted it, reversed its former decisions against it, nursed it, and clothed it with the gorgeous robes of its judicial ermine; the President embraced it, fondled it in his lap, made it his pet child, and, before it was two years old, baptized it in the blood of free Kansas. But no *adoption*, no *dress*, no *baptism*, can ever make it anything than the chief curse of the nation; the *abhorrence* of men and of angels; the *abhorrence* of nature and of God; the *abhorrence* of all intelligences throughout the universe, except the invisible demons of wrath.

I might multiply the comparisons indefinitely, tending to show the moral and political degeneracy of the rulers of our country; but I will close by comparing the Constitution of the United States with the Constitution of Oregon. The former was sanctioned by the great and good men of the Republic, who placed their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor, on the altar of universal liberty. The latter has just been sanctioned by the men now in authority, who have turned this Government into a great work-shop, in which to forge chains and manacles for down-trodden humanity; and who deny, not only liberty, but *life* even, to a whole race of their fellow-men. A man now, who loves Liberty, and believes in a righteous retribution, may well exclaim, "*I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, and that His justice cannot sleep forever.*"

The Constitution of the United States declares that it was adopted "*to establish justice, and secure the blessings of liberty*;" "*that no man should be deprived of life, liberty, or property, but by due process of law*;" that "*the citizens of each State shall be entitled to all the privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States.*"

The Constitution of Oregon contains a section which provides that—

"No free negro or mulatto, not residing in the State at the time of the adoption of this Constitution, shall ever come, reside, or be, within this State, or hold any real estate, or make any contract, or maintain any suit therein; and the Legislative Assembly shall provide by penal laws for the removal, by public

' officers, of all such free negroes and mulattoes, and for their effectual exclusion from the State, and for the punishment of persons who shall bring them into the State, or employ or harbor them therein."

It will be seen at a glance that this provision of the Oregon Constitution is, in several particulars, repugnant to the Constitution of the United States; repugnant, inasmuch as it denies all right to "*justice*," through the courts of law, to a certain class of individuals, leaving their persons and their property at the mercy of any abandoned scoundrel who may choose to violate them; repugnant to the Constitution, inasmuch as the colored citizens of the free States are not permitted to enjoy the same "*privileges and immunities*" which are allowed to the citizens of Oregon; but, if they go to Oregon on business, or are driven into an Oregon port by stress of weather, are to be seized as criminals, treated as criminals, robbed, maimed, and killed, if any ruffian pleases to kill them, with no redress whatever—the doors of justice being completely barred against them; repugnant to the Constitution inasmuch as it denies the right to *live, reside, or be*, in the land of one's birth—subjecting the tender infants of negroes and mulattoes, born in the State after the adoption of the Constitution, to be torn from their mothers' arms, (for no crime of their own, or their parents, or any other being, but God himself, for making them black,) and banished no one knows where; for if the rest of the world should be as barbarous and inhuman as Oregon, and enact similar laws, these new-born infants would be left with no resting-place on earth, no refuge but in death, and no *grave* even in death.

Sir, I defy the ingenuity of men or devils to concentrate, in the same space, more refined and consummate barbarity than is condensed and incorporated into the negro clause of the Oregon Constitution. Yet the Democratic members of our American Congress, in the nineteenth century, at noonday, with the gaze of the civilized world upon them, refuse to permit it to be stricken out; and, after they had passed the bill, proceeded to the White House, keeping step to the music of Hail Columbia, for the purpose of receiving the congratulations of the President; and, sir, they received them (with shame be it said) from a window in the Presidential mansion of a free people.

For them there is no excuse. Better be a dog, under the control of the imps of darkness, than under the control of men who delight to triumph in such monstrous inhumanity. To refuse to strike out such a provision—to rejoice over its adoption because it deprives free colored people of *all* rights, simply because they are colored, is strange indeed. Why triumph over a poor, weak, and harmless people, merely because they are black? Why abuse them for no fault of theirs? Did not the same God make both you and them? Did not the same God that gave you your color give them their color

also? Go, then, if you do not like their color, and blame God, not them. Say to Him, "Your works are not the works of wisdom." Have you no compassion for the defenceless—no feeling for the oppressed? Should such ever become my condition, let me cease to encumber the earth! Should every fibre of my heart cease to vibrate with sympathy for the afflicted and down-trodden, of whatever race or color, I pray that my heart may cease to beat altogether. Life, in such a condition, would be a curse to myself, and a curse to the world!

I repeat, for the Democracy there is no excuse. But for the Republicans who voted for the admission of Oregon, there is an excuse. They tried to get the obnoxious section out of the bill; and when they found they could not, they concluded to vote for it, for the purpose of relieving the people of Oregon from Federal control and Federal corruption; hoping that, when so relieved, they might expunge the hateful section from their Constitution. But, sir, I think the excuse hardly sufficient to justify the act. Better never do wrong, that good may come of it. As to myself, I may do many things that I ought not; I may leave many things undone that I ought to do; but, whilst the blood of a freeman courses through my veins; whilst I have a brain to think, or a heart to feel; whilst a righteous God permits me to walk upon this fair earth, and breathe the pure air of heaven, which are His free gifts to all men, without distinction of condition, race, or color, I will never sanction, or *seem* to sanction, by my vote, such monstrous injustice and barbarity as are embodied in the Oregon Constitution. You may go back to the earliest monuments of the human race, you may delve into the archives of the darkest days of antiquity, you may search the journals of barbarians and pirates, and bring to light their blackest records of infamy, and you will find nothing in them more infamous and inhuman than the negro section of the Oregon Constitution. To punish innocent men by law; to shut the courts of justice against them; to deprive them of the right to nurture their children, by penal enactments; to deny them the right to *live, or be*, on the soil that God gave to man, exhibits a degree of wickedness never surpassed by the rulers of any people, in the annals of the world.

When the stronger and more intelligent race in this country shall deny all rights to the weaker race—shut the courts of justice to their cries for protection against robbery, murder, and the violation of female purity—they will have reached the lowest depths of moral and political degradation. But I thank Him who made the black man as well as the white, who directs the destinies of men and of nations according to His own good pleasure, that He has not permitted the popular heart of this mighty empire to keep pace, in moral and political declension, with the moral and political declension of its rulers.